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## THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

APRIL, 1906

DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

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Nearly every foreign observer of American social and political affairs has commented on the prevalence of ring rule and bossism in our political life. It is commonly acknowledged that in our large cities the conduct of political matters is generally in the hands of one or a few people who manipulate the financial and other departments of the city government principally for their own benefit. Indeed, the corruption of city government in the United States has become notorious. The people seem to have abrogated their municipal rights and to have become afraid to assert themselves against the dominion of the machine, the dictates of the ring, and the commands of the bosses.

Whatever the causes of this state of affairs—and different ones are assigned by different people—we all agree that the condition is a disgrace to the public, a reflection on the manhood and integrity of the people, and a source of corruption and immorality in our public life.

But it is not only in political life that the existence of the power of the bosses has come to be recognized as a determined factor. The presence of one-man power, with its influences for evil and for good, has forced itself upon the attention of the country in the demoralization of business enterprises also. We are standing aghast at the revelations of low moral standards

<sup>1</sup>Address delivered before the Northern Illinois Teachers' Association, October, 1905

and utter lack of sense of responsibility for other people's rights and property shown in the attitude of the great insurance companies that are now under investigation; in the illegal and morally illegitimate conduct of many corporations, like the Standard Oil Company; in the indifference to public welfare shown by our railroad managers in their occasional defiance of law when it suits their purpose. The tendency among business corporations to concentrate power in the hands of one man is in many ways legitimate and necessary, but it has been in many ways illegitimately facilitated and extended in cases similar to those which have given birth to the power of corrupt political bosses. Stockholders, like voters, are aroused to declare themselves concerning the policy of a corporation only when their immediate interests are endangered, or when some strong and unusual issue presents itself to them. The resort to one-man power in politics was caused on the surface at least by a desire for clean government. We neglected to perform our duty at the polls, and our duty as common citizens in watching the men we elected to public offices and seeing that they discharged their duty well; and when we found ourselves in the midst of inevitable corruption, we took it for granted that the cause of the corruption was lack of proper power in the hands of our mayors and other high officers. We insisted that division of power in city government made it impossible to hold the mayor responsible, and that, since he did not have practically supreme power, we could not secure good government. In other words, we elected bad men to office, and then expected one good man to counter-balance all their influences and acts, and give us the kind of government which could only come from the concerted action of a large number of good officers. We had flung aside our own sense of responsibility, and we sought to escape the consequences of our act by putting the responsibility more heavily on one of our representatives. The experiment failed, as it was bound to fail in the long run; for when a group of democratic people shirk the responsibility which properly belongs to them by putting it upon some other people, their own sense of duty and obligation, their own interest and activity, become ener-

vated, and the men on whom they thrust this power are subjected to temptation to use it for their own ends. When in a business corporation, a bank, an insurance company, or what not, the president, or highest officer, is left without supervision of the directors or the stockholders, and allowed to conduct the business in his own way, on the plea that concentration of power brings greater efficiency and larger results, need we be surprised if the results are of a character shown by the insurance investigations now going on in New York? If we sacrifice individuality, initiative, and responsibility for the sake of efficiency, we may get the efficiency with its larger results for a time, but it will be at the expense of higher morality; it will be at the expense of the impairment of the public sense of right and wrong, and at the expense of the lowering of general ethical standards of conduct. You cannot cure corruption in public life or in business life by concentrating power in the hands of a ring or of one—certainly not in a democracy, for the people are responsible on the one hand to the shareholders and the directors, and on the other they must take an active part in determining the policy and the operation of the machinery of politics and the machinery of business.

Now, this same tendency to leave the direction of things to a few or to one has been showing itself more largely of late in educational matters. We seem to have evolved in late years in this country a passion for organization for organization's sake. We have been busy in educational circles in constructing systems of administration and machinery of organization, and there has been a growing tendency for the power which formulates educational policy and administers educational organization to come into the control of a smaller number. One of the most astounding things in educational life is that it is in the most democratic country in the world, and in the most democratic parts of that country, that the most autocratic systems and methods of school administration have grown up and are growing up. If you go to Massachusetts, you will find the schools close to the people and managed by officers elected by the citizens in their own communities, advised and helped by superintendents

and by a state board of education which has no immediate authority over them. If you go to some other states, as New York, you will find at the head of the system a state officer with a hierarchy of officers under him, having so wide an authority that the local authorities have little to say or do about the management of their schools, and the teachers have least of all to say. In some cases the organization seems to be theoretically so perfect, on paper, that no individual teacher or officer in the system can go wrong without being immediately checked up by the center or head of the system, and that no individual teacher or officer in the system can do anything without the direct authorization and approval of the head of the system. He determines the policy and method of the work; everybody in the system must conform to his standards and methods.

But it is not only in the few cases of "system" that I have in mind that the teacher and his personality seem to have been reduced to a minimum; the same thing is true, in a greater or less degree, throughout the country. It seems, for example, to have become the high privilege of the teachers in different states throughout the United States to attend teachers' associations to carry out the will of a ring or small group who make the slate of officers, determine the policy of the association, make its programs, and leave the rest of us the privilege of paying the bills. It is commonly said, for example, that our own National Educational Association is controlled by a small group of leading educators; controlled, that is, in the sense that the great body of members have little or nothing to say about the general policy of the association or its officers. Certain occurrences at the last meeting seem to an unbiased public to furnish evidence of the truth of this statement. What opportunity is there in that organization, as it is, for the vast body of teachers throughout the country to exert their will and make themselves felt, except by taking the disagreeable attitude of critics or rebels against the system?

Similar things may be said about many of the state and smaller organizations of teachers. The teachers are expected to assemble, to pay bills, hand up their membership fees, listen to

the speakers whether they are good or bad, be bored by the writers of papers, and then to gather at an appointed time and place to cast their votes for the election of officers previously made out by a group who did not consult them and who have had their own ends in view in making up the slate, whether these ends were such as the body of their constituents would approve, or not. The small coterie that does this business adds to its power from year to year to control the affairs of the teachers' organizations, unless and until the spirit of rebellion becomes too great and the prepared slates are smashed. That they are seldom smashed is not surprising, because he or she would be a rash teacher who would rise against an authority, whether self-constituted or otherwise, when his superintendent or some friend of his superintendent was in the ring.

In consequence of this state of affairs, it is not infrequent that one man or a few men come to think and feel and act as if they owned the school systems of their communities or their states, and a subservient public acquiesces in their assumption of power, so long, forsooth, as they seem to fulfil that fetish requirement of the American public—efficiency.

The evil reaches, however, not only through the teachers' association, but into school boards, into individual schools, and into colleges and universities. Here is a city superintendent, or a principal, or a president, who is an autocrat. He has the sole control of appointment and dismissal, and he exercises it in a way which makes it necessary for a teacher to suppress his individuality, if he would save his place; to forego initiative and spontaneity, and to follow slavishly the dictates of his superior officer, if he is to furnish sufficient proof of the "personal loyalty" which that kind of a man always demands. He speaks of the teachers as if they were his personal servants, and I have heard superintendents and college presidents talk about "my force," "my teachers," "my schools," "my institution," as the Czar of Russia or the emperor of Germany talks about "my people," "my army," "my ships," and "my soldiers." I have known some who insist on the power of summary dismissal at their own wish, yet who would resent hotly the assertion of any right on the part

of the teacher to terminate his contract at will; who resented any efforts on the part of other schools or colleges to get members of their teaching corps, and laid it up against a member of their corps if he was known to be making an effort to better his condition in salary or rank by seeking a new position. Too much and too strong administration almost inevitably has such results and degrades the teacher. Either he rebels against the system and takes the consequences of a struggle with someone officially stronger than himself, and usually to his detriment; or else he submits at the sacrifice of his self-respect and dignity. If he does the former, he is accused of being a nuisance and of causing dissension in the school, and is marked as one whom it is not safe for superintendents and presidents to employ. If he submits, the degradation which he suffers from his loss of self-respect makes the teacher less of a man or a woman, and impairs the influence that he otherwise could have exerted in developing the character of the boys and girls under his charge.

We hear of men agreeing to accept a superintendency, a presidency, or a principalship on condition that they may have a "free hand," as it is called, in "reorganizing" the faculty. To grant the propriety of such a request is to forget that an educational institution is an organic growth; that the continuance of its life and policy and present character depends upon its past career. They ask the right to hack and sever and cut deep into the life of the institution in order, forsooth, that they may impose upon it from without a preconceived policy, formed in their own minds and without reference to the continuity of the life and the historical past of the college or school; without reference to the moral obligations that have sprung up; forgetful of the fact that they are dealing with human beings and not with machines, and that any act which lowers the standard of self-respect of the teachers of the school—which makes them feel for an instant that they are not regarded as responsible and trustworthy individuals—is likely, by lowering the standard of work to lower also the standard of conduct and impair the quality of teaching.

In short, there is a tendency in certain quarters to insist that the teachers of the country shall have nothing to say or do about

the organization of our educational system. The advocates of this policy insist that "it is the business of the teacher to teach;" such a statement is mere play upon words and ignores the fact that teaching cannot be isolated from administration, and the tendency is to deify the machinery of organization and to forget the human element, to organize and run a complex system beautiful in its completeness, smooth in its workings, but smooth because it is impelled by a force from outside that crushes and overthrows internal, spontaneous influences which, although they may not work so smoothly, would give a more human, beautiful, and lifelike movement to the system. Put in plain English, the tendency of this view is to relegate the teacher to a position of subordinate importance in the educational system; and it raises the question: Which is the important thing in education—administration or teaching? Are the teachers of a country or a community, taken as a whole, incapable of giving good advice regarding educational policy? Should they be cut off altogether in the matter of giving advice from access to boards of directors, boards of trustees and superintendents, and the whole determination of the educational policy in a community be left to a single officer, like a superintendent or a president or a small board? Are the teachers of the country worthy of confidence?

At one of the meetings held in Urbana a week ago, in connection with the conference of college and university trustees, I am told that it was stated by a distinguished speaker that the faculties of colleges and universities could not be trusted to give sound advice in the shaping up of educational policy; that mere teachers are impractical, visionary, and unable to meet men of affairs and take their part in the world's activity outside the schoolroom. Such a statement is an insult to the teachers of the country, and should arouse them to a sense of the danger that they are in, if the system advocated by the speaker should prevail. If the time ever comes when the public shall lay more emphasis upon the importance of a complete and smooth administrative machinery in our schools than it lays upon the efficiency of the teaching; if public opinion ever comes to the point where it believes that the teachers as a body are incapable of giving

sound advice on educational matters, it will mean the degradation of the teaching profession. It will mean that self-respecting men and women, the equals of any officers in any administrative position, will seek other fields for their life-activities, and will refuse to subject themselves to the whims and dictates of men who might have been good slave-drivers in the days of slavery, but are hardly fit members of the educational system of an intelligent community, where men and women believe that individual initiative, spontaneity, sense of responsibility, knowledge, intelligence and sympathy, individuality—are more important factors in education than smooth administration or strong executive action. The question before us, then, is whether the tone and character of our educational systems in this country are to be determined by the great body of the teachers of the country; or are to be imposed upon the teachers by a relatively small number of men of autocratic temperament, who sneer at the teacher and insist that his proper place is a subordinate one of obedience to higher authority.

The demand for so-called strong administration is based largely on the alleged necessity for uniformity of method and smoothness in the work of the administrative machinery. The desire for uniformity is a curse in every department of educational matters. The ideal school would be one which had no uniformity of method or administration, because each individual pupil would be treated according to his specific characteristics. The only place where method and system would be needed would be in the keeping of accounts, in order that thereby the progress of the pupil might be noted. To crowd every teacher into the same mold is to destroy personality; to cast every complex character and undeveloped life into the same frame is to destroy individuality. A flower that has been pressed for herbarium purposes is, after all, only a mummy; however well it may serve as a specimen in a collection, it cannot be compared for beauty, or for the discharge of the service of flowers to mankind, with a flower in its natural condition. Its fragrance is gone, color is lost, the lights and shadows of its surface have disappeared; it is dead. So with teachers who are crowded too closely in the press of administrative machinery.

The time for dogmatism and for coercive uniformity is past. Administrative school systems, like all institutions, are good only so far as they give opportunity to all the influences within them to contribute to the growth of the people whom they affect.

The substitution of a higher form of control for a lower, of voluntary obedience and intelligent acquiescence for external control, marks a step in social progress. It always involves higher moral training, and therefore a more developed individuality and a better character, to offer more alternatives and trust a man to make the right selection, than to deprive him of all choice and compel him to walk in a prescribed way. What we need in educational administration is the replacement of coercive control and authority with free action, combined with a responsibility for the consequences of that action.

When a superintendent distrusts his teachers, or a college president distrusts his faculty; when either says that the teachers are incapable of advising with reference to school policy; when he says that they are without sound judgment, and that they need to have their ways of action pointed out to them, and kept well within the limits of a system laid down for them by their superior officers; the only conclusion that can be drawn is that that superintendent or that president has not yet learned the superiority of the organic over the mechanical. He has not learned that the flower expanding to the sun, blooming and shedding its fragrance and beauty in response to internal forces, is more typical of moral character and of the ideal individual life than the steam engine, however smoothly it runs, which is driven by a force outside of itself and is absolutely under the control of the manager of that force. He has failed to grasp that great truth of evolution that responsiveness to influence is a higher form of action than action in response to coercion. He has failed to see that spontaneous action is better than compulsory movement. He has failed to see that leadership is a higher form of authority, and is productive of far better results for the world, than is driving. He has failed to distinguish between a leader of men and a driver of slaves. He has failed to grasp the great moral and economic truth that the product of free labor is greater in

quantity and far better in character than that of slave labor. He has failed to learn that in many cases influence is more powerful than authority.

A favorite illustration of some school officers, when speaking of their faculties and teachers is that of the stage-driver. They look upon and liken the corps of teachers to a group of unruly horses which need a driver to control them and make them pull together. The figure is a vicious one. If we are to go to the animal kingdom for an example, rather should we go to the dogs pulling the sledge of the arctic traveler. The movement of the team is controlled by the leader, who is at the front of the line. He it is who, setting the example, pointing the way, blazing the path, rouses his followers to enthusiasm and brings about that unison of action that results in the highest speed. The former figure is gratifying to the men who, by accident of office, have been led to feel themselves superior to their fellow-workers, but who, by the very use of the figure in question, show that they have not grasped the first principle of sound administration.

Mere differentiation and co-ordination of function, mere complexity of organization, mere exercise of authority to compel uniformity of action, does not prove that the system under which it is done is a good system or that it is making for progress. There is an order and peace that may be attained in the streets of a city under martial law; but it is not to be compared for a moment in its effects on human character, or in its results for the progress of civilization, with the peace that comes from the acquiescence of the citizens of the town in the laws of the land. The peace and order and system that make for progress are those that command voluntary obedience and the willing co-operation of those who are subject to them. The best system of administration in school work, as in all other work, is that which does indeed work smoothly, but which attains its results from and through the acts of intelligent voluntary co-operation of all the individuals working in it, because all these individuals see its beneficent character, and because it supplies them with multifarious opportunities whereby all their differing individualities can work out a congenial development.

As I have pointed out before, too much emphasis on the authority of administrative officers tends to degrade the teacher. There are evidences of this on all hands, although conclusive proof of it is likely to be late in coming. It will come only with the next generation of teachers, when we find that the personnel of the teaching profession is lower than it was, because self-respecting individuals, with ideas of their own, have refused to enter a profession in which they are denied freedom of action and initiative. There are institutions where the moral tone of the teaching corps is deplorably bad because they have submitted too long to coercive authority that suppresses their individuality.

If, instead of submitting and degenerating, the teachers rebel, we are likely to see a wider movement for affiliation of the teachers of the country with organizations of labor. They will organize and seek the strength that comes from affiliation with other labor organizations in order to protect themselves against the autocratic authority of administrative officers. It would be deplorable to have such a movement general, for the conditions of the teachers' work and life are in too many ways different from those of the members of ordinary labor unions; and the causes which justify the organization in the one case in many respects do not apply in the case of teachers. But I do not know what other explanation to give for the tendency which seems to be growing for teachers to seek connection with organized labor. The movement cannot be stopped by force, since there are men and women of independent minds in the teaching profession, and who choose to remain in it and fight against autocratic administration; and they will call to their aid all resources available, even if it brings them into affiliation with class organizations.

Sometimes when a superintendent or a president goes to a new place, as I have remarked, he asks for a free hand in the re-organization of the faculty and in determining policy. A demand of this kind either implies that the man who makes it lacks confidence in himself as a leader; that he does not feel that it is in him to gather together the existing forces in the institution and bend them to his will by the power of his influence and character; or else it implies that he mistakes the relative value of influence and

authority. A leader of men is greater than a driver of slaves. The man who is truly strong is not the man who, on coming into a position of authority where he can dictate, cuts into the lives of such of those under him as happen not to please him or to come up to his personal standard, however satisfactory they may be from the common standard of the community. But rather that man is strong who, taking the influences and forces of the situation as they are, can combine those that are powerful for good by the influence of his character and superior education, and secure the willing co-operation of all toward the end he wishes to accomplish. Autocratic authority implies that there will be lack of continuity in the policy of the school system or institution. The policy will change with every newcomer. It implies for the teachers, uncertainty in their tenure of office; it sometimes subjects them to the caprice, prejudice, and ignorance of men to whom the work of experts does not appeal, because they do not know either its character or its value. It tends to the upbuilding of a personal clientele, and the development of envy, subservience, and toadyism. Which, then, is the more important in educational work—strong administrators or good teachers?

In truth, no one who considers the matter intelligently can hesitate a moment in answering the question. The purpose of the schools is not to give power to superintendents, principals, deans, and presidents; it is not to afford glory to teachers. It is simply and wholly to promote the welfare of the public. But even that is not a complete answer. Rather should we say that it is to promote the welfare of the pupils; and sometimes it is desirable to do things for them in which the existing state of the public opinion might not altogether acquiesce. Any system of school administration, and any system of teaching, which does not conduce to the welfare of the pupils has in some way failed; but certainly teaching is the more important of the two divisions of a school system.

As the trustees of Leland Stanford University recently said in comparing the internal organization of their university with the organization of the trustees and the president's office: "All that we have dealt with hitherto is merely the framework that

surrounds and supports it [the real university], while upon this internal organization depends the vital institution itself: this is the true body as distinguished from its mere clothing and housing."

Anything that hampers the influence and personality of the teacher; anything that degrades that personality; anything that suppresses his spontaneity or checks his initiative in the interests of his work, or makes the teacher less of a man or a woman in his own estimation or in the estimation of the people of his community or of his school, is a vicious element in the school system, and one that should be crushed out.

We have often heard a college defined as Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a boy on the other. The point of this is that a great personality, a teacher of high character and mighty influence, is a far more powerful agent in training the young without any system of administration than a person of mediocrity in a most finished, perfect, and complex system of organization. It is the teacher that is the center, the core, the heart of our school system.

The administration necessary for any school system or for any educational institution is the minimum necessary for the most effective teaching. The simplest administration is the best. An unnecessary wheel in a machine means less power and a diminution in the product. There is, indeed, danger in too little organization, but that danger is far less than the danger of too much. Too much administration leads to too much red-tape; too much of the teachers' time is spent in making reports and in writing instructions and in attending meetings that might well be omitted. The attention of the public has recently been called to the efforts of the president of the United States to cut some of the red-tape out of the administration of the national government. So complex had the administration become in some of the departments that many men employed in them seemed to think that their chief province was to read and indorse papers and tie them up in bundles with red tape. In formulating the business upon paper, they forget that the matters with which they deal are issues of life; and the content, in their minds, is lost in the framework.

There is danger that it may be so in our schools. Too much administration brings about a waste of time and knowledge that should be used by the teacher in studying and devising better methods of teaching, and to personal attention to individual students. These are the things which help to form life and character, although they may leave less perfectly written records. There is too much emphasis in some places on clean record sheets, on record books that show complete lists of tardiness and absence, with the causes.

There are three divisions, or parts, necessary to a school system or college. In order of their importance, they are the general educational policy, the teaching, and the administrative organization. Who shall determine these? The first deals with external, public, policy, and the system of instruction, in their relation to other school systems or colleges in the same community or state. It is a question of general educational policy, and the town or city or state must determine its details by the demand of the public. What things does the public wish the pupils to study? The answer would be different in Turkey from what it is in Illinois. No authority in one man, or in a group of men, in a democratic country like our own, can determine, or should be permitted to determine, the general policy of our school systems or any part of them. The schools should be close to the people and they should have local color; they should reflect in a measure the traditions, history, and character of the community. It is true that differences in the educational standards of communities in the same state and country are fast disappearing, but this disappearance should be brought about by the exchange of ideas and a closer connection between the people themselves, and not by the imposition of uniform standards by some external authority, whether a state superintendent, a commissioner, or a national superintendent.

It may be objected to this theory that there are communities with low standards; poor communities that cannot afford to have as good schools as they should have or want to have. This is true, just as there are individuals who are less well off than other individuals. If the interests of the rest of the state require that

a particular community shall have higher standards, which it wishes but cannot afford, then it is the business of the rest of the state to help it by a state tax. If a community has low standards and poor schools, although the people can afford better so far as money is concerned, the question arises whether it is the business of the public to coerce that community into better methods, or to educate it to a higher life. I take it that some good results can be attained by leading the people of a community to see that they are losing in the race and falling behind because of their low educational standards.

If these statements are correct; if the theory of freedom and public control that I have briefly laid down is sound, then the schools should be kept close to the people by the election of school boards. Appointed school boards are an anomaly in our country and can be justified, if justifiable at all, only by the peculiar exigencies of some local situation.

The denial of this theory of democracy in our school system, the attempt to put autocratic power in the hands of one or a few men, whether superintendent, commissioner, presidents, or directors, is a phase of the distrust of democracy which has become too pronounced in this country of late. Cannot the people be trusted to determine for themselves what is for their highest welfare, educationally? If it be proved, as some say, that it is necessary for the authority to determine for them what is good in education, then our democracy is a farce. If the standards are low, will these be raised and the people strengthened by depriving them of the exercise of judgment and responsibility?

How, then, shall we draw the lines that are to distinguish the functions of the various parts of the administration and organization of our school systems and our colleges? What shall we assign to our boards of education, our trustees, our superintendents, presidents, and other officers? Clearly enough, the boards of education must determine, as representatives of the public, the general educational policy of the schools. They are the authority that must say whether the high school shall have a classical course or a commercial course, or both. They should seek advice of the superintendent; they should call in to their

help the state superintendent, and any other state educational officer whom they can reach. They should also call to their assistance the advice of their corps of teachers. These are the experts. They are likely to have the best judgment as to the adaptability of a practical course of study to the constituency for which they are working.

Similarly, when a superintendent, having been instructed by his board of education, or when a president having been instructed by the board of trustees, as to the general character of the educational policy of the schools or the college, sets out to devise an administrative system or organization which will carry out these plans, he will get the best results if he consults those who are to do the work. To devise a scheme on paper, "out of his head," and without reference to local conditions and the experience, education, and personality of the teachers, is to invite failure.

To say that faculties and corps of teachers are incapable of giving advice on school matters or college policy is to say what is not true. This remark could be made only by one who is blinded by his own conceit or ignorance of educational history. The internal organization of a system which is to carry out the policy of board of education or boards of trustees should be made by superintendents and presidents only after they have consulted, so far as possible, the teaching corps, and have incorporated the ideas of the latter with their own. No school system can otherwise be sound or well administered.

The teaching itself, of course, can be done only by the teachers, but teaching involves more than merely "imparting instruction." Teaching cannot be intelligently done unless the teacher participates in the way that I have already described, in shaping the policy of the school system of which he is a part. We are dealing with boys and girls, men and women, human nature. It is not necessary for one cog in a machine to know anything about the character of another cog; both are dead matter, and the machine as a whole will do its work notwithstanding. Not so with teaching. The teacher must know something of the general policy of the school and of the community in which he is to

teach, if he is to do his work in a way that will conform to the system and promote this policy. The teacher, however, must not make the mistake of supposing that he can do it all. He must rely on his superintendent. He must have access through his superintendent to the school board, or through his president to the board of trustees. The teaching corps represents that part of the public that are experts in these matters. To deny the teachers the right of being consulted, and of consulting with all their superior officers in the proper manner, is to stifle the sense of responsibility. "Public spirit dies where the people are debarred from public action."

The third part of the school system is its internal organization and administration. Here are the offices of the superintendents, the principals, the presidents, the deans, the registrars, and what not, in our various educational institutions. Their business is to devise the machinery which will give opportunity to the living body, the educational system, to grow to perfection. They are to furnish the sustenance, the sunlight, the framework, the earth, and all the collateral material equipment. They are to guide—and sometimes it is necessary for them to prune; but the pruning should always be an incident of their office and not the purpose. This phase of their work must not be magnified. The proper phase of their work is to construct and develop, not to destroy and repress. It is false to say, as a certain well-known educator has often remarked, that it is the real function of the college president or the superintendent to repress action. Their general function is to encourage action in the right directions. It shows a lack of knowledge of the vast amount of waste involved to take the other ground.

We come now to the consideration of democracy in the educational process; democracy in the school and in actual training; democracy in the immediate sphere of the teacher.

The whole character of our education should be democratic. The general aim, or rather the emphasis of the educational aim, changes from time to time, and this fact makes us lose sight of the importance of keeping its democratic character. The aim of education changes with the current of public opinion. The

phase of life upon which the public, at a particular time, is laying emphasis is the phase that finds prominence in our educational systems. In the past, general culture and intelligent training of the individual—the production of polished members of the upper classes in society—was the aim and function of our school system and our educational training. In the last century the keynote of philosophical thought was the emphasis of political equality and democracy in government, and our education, in its organization and subject-matter, assumed a political character. Civic training, training of citizenship, training for membership in a democratic political community, was emphasized. Today the successful pursuit of business is regarded by the community and the country and the world as the test of a fully equipped man. Accordingly, our educational systems have been turning more and more to what is called practical training. Training for business, for engineering, trade, the law, and other practical pursuits, is the determining note of our educational course. The present demand that our schools shall train for economic success is particularly dangerous to the maintenance of our democratic ideals. The very test of excellence, economic success, tends to promote the formation of classes to the destruction of our democratic equality.

We need, therefore, to guard more carefully than ever the democratic spirit of our educational aim. We need to remember constantly that, after all, we are equal citizens of a free country, and that it should be our constant purpose to open the way for equal opportunity to all in all walks of life; that our schools, therefore, should afford training for all classes and all individuals to pursue any career for which they are particularly fitted. The establishment of trade schools for the children of people in particular trades is undemocratic, because it tends to stratify society; it tends to make and perpetuate trade classes. I have no sympathy, therefore, with the demand sometimes made that the children of a mechanic should be put to industrial studies, while the children of a lawyer need not be. Mechanical, industrial, training should be open to all, whatever the social class from which they come; but it should be open as a special means of

yielding that all-round education which every boy and girl should receive, and not for the purpose of enabling or encouraging the mechanic's boy to be a mechanic, the grocer's boy to be a grocer, or the lawyer's boy to be a lawyer.

Over and above all, the general and most important aim of any school controlling and dominating the immediate purposes of curriculums and particular studies, whether commercial or classical or industrial, should be kept constantly in view; and this general aim is social service. Every pupil in the school should have the idea instilled into him that, while he is taking a course of study that will make him an economic success, he is to strive for that economic success, and the school is maintained to let him achieve that economic success, for the main purpose of serving society and promoting human progress. He will do this if he achieves his own success in the highest sense.

In the next place, the curriculum should be democratic in character. A course of study should be close to the demand of the community, and no community should have forced upon it, by boards of education or superintendents or trustees, courses of study that are foreign to its tastes, ill fitted to its life, or alien to its moral and philosophical beliefs. So far as possible, the school curriculum should be suited to all classes in the community; and if a community can afford it, several courses should be offered to meet the demands of the various groups, or classes.

Moreover, within the school itself the student, under the guidance and advice of parents and teachers, may well be allowed some liberty. Opportunity for selection of studies develops the judgment and the sense of responsibility. Personally, I do not believe in large liberty of choice so low down in the school system as the high school; but it is not the amount of choice, but the principle of choice, for which I am contending.

In the next place, the disciplinary arrangement of a school should be democratic. The school should be so organized that the pupils shall feel responsible for its orderly conduct, and it should not be so organized that order is preserved simply as a result of the coercion of the teacher. I do not mean by this that the government of the school should be left to the boys and girls;

nor am I blind to the fact that there are many cases where the sense of responsibility must fail and coercion must be used. What I am insisting on is that they should be used only when persuasive measures cannot be relied upon, and that they should be abandoned as fast and as far as accountability is developed.

Finally, over and above all the points that I have mentioned, in its far-reaching importance, is the necessity of a democratic spirit on the part of the teacher. I have said that a college has been described as a great teacher on one end of a log and a boy on the other. The personality of the teacher will determine the school, and will largely control the point of view and the mode of thought of the pupils and will give trend to their course of study and actions. If the teacher is not broad, generous, and democratic in spirit, the school will not be, and the pupils will not be. There is no higher duty upon teachers, not only in the public schools, but in all the schools of the country, than to emphasize and perpetuate and spread the spirit of democratic equality—the equality of social and economic opportunity in all lines of life. I know that this doctrine has gone a little out of fashion; but if we permit it to go too far out of fashion, we shall have to reckon with dangers to our democratic institutions—dangers which it will be hard to control, because we have allowed the spirit of democracy to decay.

Fellow-teachers, there is no profession on which rests a greater responsibility than upon our own for the preservation of the spirit of democracy. The discharge of that duty calls for self-sacrifice; it calls for obedience to duly constituted authority; it calls at times for the abrogation of our personal interests, the suppression of our personal desires, the giving up of our personal ambitions. The influences that go out from the schoolrooms of the country are more far-reaching, more lasting, and make a deeper impression upon the character and life of our people, than the influences of any other institution excepting the home. Just as the fathers and mothers of the land give their lives in a very real sense for the upbuilding of the lives and careers of their boys and girls, and for the maintenance of that country whose establishment and preservation have cost so many lives and en-

tailed so many sacrifices; so the teachers of the land find their best success and do their richest work and attain their highest glory in the self-effacement that comes from pouring their lives and their spirit into the current of life of the pupils that are committed to their care, though their names may never be known beyond their own communities, nor their memories cherished except in the grateful hearts of a few who feel that without their teaching they would be worse men and women than they are.

Most of you have given up many things to be teachers; some of you have left careers that would have brought you fame and a larger measure of success, as success goes, than you have attained or ever will attain in the work you are doing now. But there is a success that cannot be seen; there is a reward of the spirit; that success and that reward come to the humblest of us when he sees that the boy or girl he has been trying to train has turned out a true man or a true woman, and that, however humble the career he may fill in his community, his life will ring true, his ideas will be sound, and the community life will be better, because he has caught something of your spirit and is a product of your sacrifice.